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U.S. Office of Civilian  
Defense

Stop fire - save lives -  
protect property...

[Washington]

[1942]

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STOP FIRE • SAVE LIVES • PROTECT PROPERTY • MAINTAIN PRODUCTION

# FIRE PREVENTION WEEK—OCT. 4-10

U. S. OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation

Any loss of human life, any interference with production, any loss of critical materials hinders and impedes our war effort.

Uncontrolled fire, even in normal times, is a national menace. It kills or disables thousands of our people and destroys a significant portion of our national wealth each year. Today, when every machine is being taxed to its fullest productive capacity, when new hands are working with unfamiliar tools, and when agents of our enemies are seeking to hinder us by every possible means, it is essential that destructive fire be brought under stricter control in order that victory may be achieved at the earliest date.

Nothing less than the united vigilance and effort of all the people will suffice to break the grip of this menace. Fire hazards everywhere must be detected at once and eliminated. Loss of life and property from blaze and smoke must be reduced in every State of the Union. Prevention of all uncontrolled fires must be our goal.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning October 4, 1942, as Fire Prevention Week; and I earnestly request the people of the country to give special heed to the importance of taking active measures during that week, and throughout the year, to conserve our human and material resources from the destructive toll of fire; and I direct the Office of Civilian Defense and other appropriate Federal agencies to initiate programs for emphasizing the importance of attaining these objectives. I also desire to enlist the cooperation of State and local governments, of educators and civic groups, and of the press, the radio, and the motion-picture industry, with a view to promoting widespread realization of the dangers of fire and knowledge of the methods of controlling it.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 5th day of August in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixty-seventh.



By the President:

*Cordell Hull*  
Secretary of State

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*



COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES • FEDERATION OF MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANIES • INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS • INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS • NATIONAL BOARD OF FIRE UNDERWRITERS • NATIONAL BUREAU FOR INDUSTRIAL PROTECTION • NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION • NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL • UNITED STATES JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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## FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

is observed

every year during that week in which October 9, the anniversary of the Chicago Fire, occurs. But this year the war has given Fire Prevention Week unusual significance.

The Nation is preparing to defend itself from fire that may be caused by incendiary bombs. Equally vital is the need to prevent the slowdown of war production by fires that may result from sabotage or ordinary causes. And, at this time when we are facing material shortages, replace-

ments in the home and elsewhere must be reduced to a minimum.

The seriousness of the situation has been recognized by every organization concerned with fire safety, and, for the first time, the sponsors of Fire Prevention Week are joined, this year, by the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense which is charged with civil protection in wartime.

By virtue of the President's proclamation, the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense now calls upon the entire Nation to heed the danger of fire, a danger which threatens our lives, menaces the security of our homes, and waits, ready in an instant, to sabotage our war industries.

## FIRE—ALLY OF THE AXIS

FIRE is an active ally of the Axis. Every fire is a reversal for the United Nations. There can be no insurance for the Nation against the losses of time and irreplaceable materials resulting from fire.

The Nation's material losses, in 1941, were estimated to be \$303,895,000. This was an increase of \$17,493,633 over the losses for the previous year. Already in 1942, we are burning up more factories, homes, and needed raw material than we did last year. For the first 5 months of 1942, our losses exceeded those for the same period a year ago by \$9,072,000. Fire kills ten thousand people in the United States every year, many of them important workmen in our industries.

The loss by accidental fire of the Normandie

in New York and the huge stockpile of rubber at Fall River, Mass., was as much help to Hitler as though he had set them off with his own incendiary bombs. These and last year's huge conflagrations on the Brooklyn waterfront are sensational. But there are many losses less obvious.

If a cottage on a side street burns to the ground or is damaged by fire, few people connect the incident with our war economy. Yet repair or rebuilding takes material that reduces the Nation's stockpile, to say nothing of the individual direct and indirect losses involved. Even such a small fire helps the enemy as much as if the cottage had been bombed—it is more help, because the destruction is accomplished at no cost to the Axis.

## THE PURPOSES OF FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

THE elimination of our fire losses cannot be accomplished in a single week, of course. But Fire Prevention Week affords an opportunity to impress upon all of us the necessity for keeping our homes and places of employment safe from fire.

One of the objectives of this annual observance is to teach us how to eliminate the causes of fire. Carelessness and negligence are at the bottom of most of its causes, and it is estimated that more than one-fourth of all fires are preventable, with a large share of the rest being partly preventable.

An equally important objective is to teach us how we can defend ourselves against the fires that do start. Experience demonstrates that not all fires can be prevented, even with far

greater vigilance than the Nation practices today.

Provision of protective equipment is complicated at present by the fact that many of the materials used in the manufacture of fire-fighting equipment are needed by the Army and the Navy. It is essential, therefore, that we take better care than ever before of existing equipment and learn how to use it more effectively. Substitute materials for additional equipment are being sought in our great American laboratories so that we can better arm ourselves against fire. But we must not let the knowledge of that fact relax for a moment our vigilance against fires, our care of the equipment we now have, or our efforts to learn to use that existing equipment at new high levels of efficiency.

## RESULTS COUNT

THAT observance of Fire Prevention Week does provide greater security is shown in the reduced fire losses of communities. A survey shows, for the cities reporting, a reduction of 45.3 percent in fire losses during Fire Prevention Week, the

week preceding and the week following. Any community can equal this record if it adopts a well-planned and executed Fire Prevention Week program.

# FIRE FACTS

## TEN MOST COMMON FIRE CAUSES IN THE LAST TEN YEARS

	NUMBER OF FIRES	LOSS
1. Matches—Smoking . . . . .	1,238,275	\$174,979,768
2. Misuse of electricity . . . . .	416,866	94,848,885
3. Exposure (fire originating off premises) . . . . .	322,698	156,560,237
4. Sparks on roofs . . . . .	300,994	70,208,310
5. Overheated or defective chimneys, flues, etc. . . . .	291,181	119,985,311
6. Lightning . . . . .	259,591	50,516,178
7. Stoves, furnaces, boilers, and their pipes . . . . .	253,382	100,344,879
8. Open lights . . . . .	245,512	24,878,160
9. Petroleum and its products . . . . .	221,725	77,897,461
10. Hot ashes and coals—Open fires . . . . .	189,111	26,624,942

## SOME FIRES CAUSING LARGE LOSS OF LIFE

	LIVES LOST
January 20, 1942 . . . . . Apartment house, Lynn, Mass. . . . .	13
October 28, 1941 . . . . . Two-family frame house, Montclair, N. J. . . . .	12
October 16, 1941 . . . . . Passenger bus, Clanton, Ala. . . . .	17
August 18, 1941 . . . . . Pier and freight steamer, Brooklyn, N. Y. . . . .	34
June 29, 1941 . . . . . Cruiser explosion and fire, Bailey Island, Maine . . . . .	37
May 18, 1941 . . . . . Excursion boat explosion, at sea . . . . .	39
March 25, 1941 . . . . . Oil tanker explosion and fire, at sea . . . . .	19
March 10, 1941 . . . . . Theater fire, Brockton, Mass. . . . .	13
February 7, 1941 . . . . . Lodginghouse fire, Dallas, Tex. . . . .	13
February 5, 1941 . . . . . Cotton quilt plant fire, New Haven, Conn. . . . .	10
December 17, 1941 . . . . . Explosion in teuement, Cincinnati, Ohio . . . . .	14
July 31, 1940 . . . . . Rail car fire, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio . . . . .	43
April 23, 1940 . . . . . Dance hall fire, Natchez, Miss. . . . .	207
January 3, 1940 . . . . . Apartment hotel fire, Minneapolis, Minn. . . . .	19

## ANNUAL FIRE LOSSES BY OCCUPANCIES

OCCUPANCY	NUMBER OF FIRES	LOSS
(a) Public buildings (Including hospitals, schools, churches, theaters)	13,300	\$19,650,000
(b) Dwellings (Including hotels, apartments, homes, etc.)	393,000	92,000,000
(c) Mercantiles (Including office buildings, warehouses, restaurants, and other mercantiles)	72,000	70,100,000
(d) Manufacturing (Including mills, packing plants, bakeries, cleaners, etc.)	23,700	52,900,000
(e) Miscellaneous (Including barns, lumber yards, railroad and wharf properties, powder plants, automobiles, etc.)	183,000	65,350,000
Totals . . . . .	685,000	\$300,000,000

# WHERE YOU CAN OBTAIN FIRE PREVENTION WEEK CAMPAIGN MATERIAL

## NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

60 Battery March Street, Boston, Mass.

**Fire Prevention Week Handbook.** For use of committees and others preparing Fire Prevention Week campaigns, elaborately illustrated and with complete campaign directions. 50 cents per copy, reductions on quantity orders.

**Fire Prevention Week Poster** entitled "Today Every Fire Helps Hitler." Printed in red, white, and black, 12 x 16 inches. \$1 per hundred, \$8.50 per thousand.

**Fire Prevention Week Poster** entitled "Inspect, Detect, Correct Fire Hazards," red, white, and blue, 12 x 16 inches. \$1 per hundred, \$8.50 per thousand.

**A Two-Color Flyer "Fire Is the Friend of the Enemy."** 5½ x 8½ inches. For home and school distribution and as a mailing piece. 50 cents per hundred, \$3.50 per thousand.

**Fire Quiz.** An 8-page colored folder including an entertaining fire quiz with answers, for adults and children. \$1 per hundred, \$8.50 per thousand.

**Fire Prevention Week Poster.** Printed in red, white, and blue. 3½ x 12½ inches. For use on bulletin boards, store windows, billboards, vehicles, etc. 50 cents per hundred, \$3.50 per thousand.

**"Facts About Fire."** 16-page pamphlet containing material for speeches, newspaper publicity, radio broadcasts, etc. Special for the 1942 Fire Prevention Week. 5 cents a copy, \$3.50 per hundred.

**Fire Prevention Picture Book.** 16-page booklet for school children. 6 x 9 inches, in colors. 5 cents a copy, \$4 per hundred.

**"Defend Your Home and Country Against Fire."** 2-color folder for home use. \$1.50 per hundred, \$8.50 per thousand.

**"Keep Your Home From Burning."** 2-color folder on the causes and prevention of home fires. \$1.50 per hundred, \$8.50 per thousand.

NOTE: Special imprinting on posters, flyers, and folders can be handled at small additional charge

## NATIONAL BOARD OF FIRE UNDERWRITERS

1014 Merchants Exchange Bldg.,  
San Francisco, Calif.

85 John Street,  
New York, N. Y.

222 West Adams Street,  
Chicago, Ill.

**Safeguarding the Home Against Fire.** Grammar School Manual. Samples free. 5 cents a copy in quantity.

**Safeguarding the Nation Against Fire.** High School Manual. Samples free. 7 cents a copy in quantity.

**Safeguarding America Against Fire.** Two-color Annual Fire Prevention Publication. Contains suggestions and material. Free in small quantities. 2 cents a copy.

**How To Keep From Going to Blazes.** Illustrated leaflet. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Your Life—Your Property, Are They Safe?** Illustrated leaflet. Free in small quantities. \$5 per thousand.

**Danger in Your Home.** Illustrated leaflet. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Two Minutes Tick By . . . Another Home Goes Up in Smoke!** Two-color booklet. Illustrated. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**The Door of Opportunity.** Two-color booklet. Contains inspection blank. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Fire! Fire!** Two-color booklet, photos illustrating hazards. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Let's Save a Life at Home.** Two-color booklet. Illustrated. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Told by a Tongue of Flame.** Fire prevention fantasy for classroom reading. Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Playlets for Children: The Trial of Fire; The Defeat of Major Fire Destruction; The Fire at Bradford's** (for high schools); **The Conference of the Fire Spooks.** Free in small quantities. \$10 per thousand.

**Puzzles for Children.** Free in small quantities. \$2 per thousand.

**Self Inspection Blanks.** Free in small quantities. Industrial, \$7.50 per thousand. Mercantile, \$2.50 per thousand. Home, \$2 per thousand.

**Just One Minute.** Single sheet on fire prevention. Free in small quantities. 85 cents per thousand.

**Every Fire Is Sabotage Today.** New wartime leaflet in two colors. Free in small quantities. \$8 per thousand.

**Poster.** Every Fire Is Sabotage Today. \$10 per thousand.

**Sticker.** Every Fire Is Sabotage Today. 20 cents per thousand in rolls of 500 and 1,000.

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Insurance Department, Washington, D. C.

**"Safeguard Industry Against Fire for National Defense."** Pamphlet. Makes available to industry common-sense rules for recognizing fire hazards and defective protection against fire, and simple instructions for inspection, protection, and correction; issued by the National Fire Waste Council. 7 cents per copy.

**"Rural Fire Departments."** Bulletin. Contains approved procedures for organizing and operating fire departments in rural areas. 3 cents per copy.

**Special Fire Prevention Week Bulletin.** Designed principally for commercial organizations, chambers of commerce, etc. 5 cents per copy.

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